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Johnson Hits CIA Criticism, Calls for Unity

CPYRGHT

President Johnson says he regrets "some of the intemperate statements and some of the severe criticisms" concerning the Central Intelligence Agency's program of covert subsidies to private organizations.

Johnson was asked at his news conference yesterday about recent disclosures that the CIA provided extensive financial support to dozens of private groups since the early 1950s.

"I don't think any of us are happy to see our nation divided and see our country upset," the President said. "I think it would be better for all of us if we were united and if all of us could agree on a wise course of action, and be free of any mistakes, any errors."

Johnson said he expected a report from the three-man cabinet-level commission he has appointed to study the problem "some time by the middle or the 20th of the month."

In a related development, a U.S. National Student Association staff member publicly resigned yesterday, saying that his organization secretly negotiated with the CIA in the weeks immediately preceding disclosure of the link between the two groups.

It was the disclosure of NSA's receipt of more than \$3 million from the CIA over a 15-year period that triggered reports of other organizations receiving similar financial aid.

Larry Rubin, NSA's educational affairs director, said the student group's officers met on four occasions with CIA representatives in late January and early February before Ramparts magazine released the text of an article saying the CIA provided extensive covert

financial support to NSA over a 15-year period.

NSA officers immediately called Rubin's charge "absurd."

Richard Stearns, international affairs vice president for NSA, told reporters that virtually all details of the link between the two groups had been disclosed in statements by the officers and

by NSA's National Supervisor Board. He cited earlier newspaper accounts quoting officers

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